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Ruf: Hier ist ein Lehrer, zeigt ihm, wie er lehren soll und setzt ihm einen Inspektor, um nachzusehen, dass er nichts Übles tue. Als einer derer, mit denen Professor Armstrong experimentieren will, sage ich: Gut, kommen Sie. Stellen Sie sich in der dumpfen Atmosphäre einer Slum-Schule vor eine Klasse von sechzig Knaben, für sechs Monate einmal, sagen wir vom Oktober bis April, keinen Tag weniger, Tag für Tag, mit dem schäbigen Mobiliar, den dürftigen Mitteln, die eine sparsame Schulkommission gewährt, und kein Lehrer des Landes wäre, der sich nicht freute, alles zu lernen, was Sie ihn in dieser Zeit lehren könnten.

Wir brauchen nicht mehr Inspektion, nicht mehr Verwalter. Aber bessere Arbeitsbedingungen müssen wir haben. Alles kommt darauf hinaus: Ist's der Mühe wert? Die Leute unseres Landes sagen Nein. Wenn sie ihren Irrtum einsehen, so sagen sie Ja, und wir können unsere Reform ins Werk setzen.

Stellt den tüchtigen Lehrer unter richtige Verhältnisse, und er wird nicht anders, als lehren können, wie ein Künstler nicht anders, als zeichnen kann, wenn er sich in einer schönen Landschaft befindet; denn der wahre Lehrer ist ein Künstler. Er kann nicht nach Mass arbeiten, noch nach zahlreichen Vorschriften, mögen sie noch so geschickt abgefasst sein. Sein vollendetes Ziel ist ein gesundes, starkes Kind. Dieses sollte das verwendete Geld wert sein. Mit einer Klasse von zwölf wäre die Arbeit noch schwierig genug. Mit einer Klasse von sechzig ist sie unmöglich; der Lehrer kann dabei seinen Blick nicht auf die wirkliche Aufgabe richten. Ich plaudiere für Freiheit für den Lehrer, Freiheit zu versuchen, Freiheit selbst Fehler zu machen; je mehr der Staat dem Lehrer Freiheit gibt, um so mehr an Wert wird der Lehrer dem Staat zurückgeben.

(Schweizerische Schulzeitung.)

Modern Languages Taught as Living Languages.*

By **Marie Duerst**, High School, Dayton, Ill.

It is with some diffidence that I offer to read a paper before this Association. What induces me to do it is the hope that it may elicit a discussion by which I may be benefited and so, perchance, benefit others.

There is every reason to believe that this is a time of transition and reform, of growth and development in the teaching of modern languages. Their value has been recognized in nearly all our schools and colleges by the increased facilities provided for the study of these languages, as compared with those of former years.

* Paper read before the 17th annual convention of the Modern Language Association of Ohio, Springfield, O.

But the conditions of work in modern language teaching still vary more than perhaps those of any other subject. Would it then not be well for us to hold counsel with each other, to compare notes, to see how we can supply to the best of our power the bright young minds that come to us for instruction with that which will most help them to fill their future place in the world?

Surely this assembly must be rich in experience and ideas, being composed of such various elements. I think I see before me some staid, conservative teachers of the old school, clinging tenaciously to technicalities; some energetic reformers, perhaps a little too radical, employing exclusively the so-called natural method; then, again some, who are eclectic, and, seeing much that is commendable in each of these methods; they choose what is good from all and endeavor to apply it to the best of their ability. To this creed I confess myself, believing that its adherents are pursuing the right course to teach the modern languages as living languages.

I beg my hearers to bear in mind, that I do not presume to present any new ideas, still less would I attempt to teach here, where I came to learn much. Allow me also to state, that in my remarks I have reference to French and German.

While books and methods are of vital importance and should be well and judiciously chosen, the all important factor is the instructor. To teach the modern languages as living languages he must be not only conversant with the language to be taught, but must possess a thorough command of it. His vocabulary must be an inexhaustible treasure, from which he may draw what the given occasion demands. He must have at his beck and call a wealth of linguistic information, of idiomatic expressions, sayings, proverbs etc. which he uses discriminately and with ingenuity.

He must also be well versed in the vernacular of his pupils, to use it, if need be, in the class room, to compare it with the language they are studying; to correct mistakes they may, and in fact do make in their own tongue. Moreover, it is my firm belief that the pupil's esteem and respect for their teacher of foreign languages is in proportion to the knowledge he shows of the use of their mother tongue.

Last but not least, the teacher must have love and enthusiasm for the languages he is to impart. He must be convinced, that his is the widest opportunity for the enlargement of the mental horizon, for the exercise of the higher activities of the mind, for shaping character and giving broad culture. To him is assigned a noble part in the great work of education.

What a power for the mental and moral good is put into his hands! Happy, if he wields it well, and with it succeeds in imparting his own intellectual life to his pupils. Let us now consider how we can best meet the demands made on the instructors of modern languages.

Some of our students come to us with a purely utilitarian object in view, knowing that when seeking employment they have an advantage if able to speak some German; some wish to learn French or German as an accomplishment; some mainly for an acquaintance with the literature; some because their parents intend to go abroad with them as soon as they shall have finished the High School course; others study it in order to meet a requirement of the college they wish to attend; still others do it with a view to scientific pursuits, which they cannot follow, unless they are able to read the best professional works, which are often written in French or German.

We cannot have regard for special purposes and circumstances; not as long as we have large, mixed classes. The question for us to consider is, how to use the very limited time to the best advantage, so that we may take the student to the farthest possible point on the road, toward a mastery of the tongue we profess to teach. We must seek to offer such instruction as will do the greatest good to the greatest number.

Wherein shall this consist?

To my mind in an efficient correlation of conversation, grammar, reading, translation and composition.

The living language to be taught must be spoken by the teacher, so that the student learns French or German, not merely facts about those languages.

Not that English need be proscribed; it must not be, cannot be, if progress is to be made, but it should be used as little as possible, and only when repeated attempts to make intelligible an explanation in French or German have failed.

The writer believes that on the very first day a beginner should hear the sound of the language he desires to learn, and that he should be taught in that language as far as possible. The ear must be habituated, the understanding developed, and pronunciation learned by imitation.

With some ingenuity, alertness and pleasing gestures on the part of the teacher the pupils will readily understand and quickly pick up the ordinary expressions and phrases used in the work of the class room. They are delighted to be addressed in the foreign tongue. It is an inspiration to have some 25 pairs of bright eyes looking at one while intently listening to what you tell them, trying to understand the new foreign tongue, seeking to imitate and to reply as best they can.

The more pupils are accustomed from the very beginning to the thought that French or German is to be learned less from the book than from the mouth of the teacher, the more quickly will intercourse between teacher and pupil in the foreign language be attainable, and the pupil's shyness of expressing himself in the foreign tongue disappear.

I make it a daily practice with all my pupils on their entering the class room to spend a few minutes in exchanging some remarks in German or French on what ever presents itself most readily and naturally.—The lesson of the day, the weather, a new period in the school calendar, a holiday in store, current events, the reason of some one's absence on the previous day, something seen on the way to school, something heard in a general assembly on that morning, a newspaper article of general interest etc.

My object in doing so is to familiarize their ear again, and to prepare their organs of speech for what is to be done in the foreign tongue, of which they have not heard a sound since they left my class room. I do it also that a few words may be added to the vocabulary; an acquisition which I then ask them to put to use.

If German or French is distinctly and correctly spoken in the class room, every sentence—whether spoken or read—will be a drill in the noun and adjective declensions, in the conjugation, in the government of preposition and in the elementary rules for arrangement. The constant use of the language in the class room may largely take the place of special exercises in grammar, of which I mean to speak next.

Though we may have a religious regard for the spirit rather than the letter of the language, we cannot teach it without the use of grammar, else our pupils will play a parrot-like part; they will be the proud possessors of a number of phrases and idioms they have heard or learned, but without the ability to form new sentences in a grammatically correct way, since they are destitute of the principles and rules of the language. Grammar deals with the facts and the laws of the language, so we cannot dispense with it; nor can we afford to teach it but incidentally.

Let us reduce it to a minimum; let us teach only the essentials, and do this rationally, but thoroughly. True, the pupil finds it hard work. What of it? He is supposed to be preparing in school for life, and when he gets out of school he will be reminded at every turn that valuable acquisitions have to be worked for. There is no royal road to languages and French and German are not to constitute a part of the so-called "soft electives."

Our task is arduous too, especially when it comes to correcting manuscripts of large classes, in some of which we are disappointed, because we see the pupils did not grasp the point we meant to make clear. There is many an evening when I feel that my pupils have taught me more on that day than I was able to teach them, and that they have pointed out to me a way to make myself better understood the next day. How true what Carlisle says: "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" And this not only in grammar.

And then, the difficulties the learning of a foreign language presents can be largely reduced, if not obviated, by the teacher's skilful diversifying the grammatical exercises, of which an endless variety may be given. How interestingly, for instance, the tense, mode, number and person of the verb may be practiced by transposing at sight a pleasing anecdote or fable that has just been read and is thoroughly understood from one person to another, from one tense to another.

Translation, reading, dictation, reproducing of a short story, memorizing an exquisite poem, paraphrasing a little ballad, writing a description of the season, giving a synopsis of a bright scene of a play read in a class—all these can be made very interesting and useful, and are conducive, each in its own way, to familiarize the student with the language he is learning.

Some weeks ago one of my colleagues had been asked by a pupil to excuse her 15 minutes before the close of the recitation in order to attend a class in cooking, to which she had taken a great liking. The request had been granted—but the signal for dismissal rang before that pupil had even thought of looking at the clock. I call this making a language lesson intensely interesting.

I mentioned translation. Some teachers claim to do entirely without it. I fain would have them tell me how, especially with beginners. Translation, clear, accurate, simple, adequate, yet idiomatic is the best, in fact often the only test of the knowledge of both idioms.

It is doubtless well to make from the very beginning systematic efforts to induce the student to connect the new words with the things themselves and not with the words of his native language; but on the other hand there is no economy of time or strength in persistently rejecting the help, which the student's native language offers, when we wish to make clear to him the meaning of a new word or idiom.

Let the translation be made mostly into the language the student is seeking to acquire; but let him also translate into the mother tongue fine valuable passages which we fear he does not adequately appreciate. But let us see to it that it be translation, not transliteration.

As a pleasing exercise for my older pupils and to guard them against the tendency toward literal translation we sometimes compare the proverbs and idioms of one language with the other. Thus we find that the Englishman "falls out of the frying pan into the fire;" the German "kommt aus dem Regen in die Traufe," and the elegant French "tombe de Charybde en Scylla." Every one has his hobby; Jedem Narren gefällt seine Kappe; Chacun a sa marotte. One must not have too many irons in the fire; Wer zwei Hasen auf einmal jagt, bekommt keinen; Qui trop

embrasse, mal étreint. He makes mountains of mole hills; Er macht aus jeder Mücke einen Elephanten; Faire d'une mouche un éléphant. Speak of angels and you hear the rustling of their wings; Wenn man vom Schelm spricht, kommt er; Quand on parle du loup, on en voit la queue.

As to reading, the longer I teach the more I am convinced that we cannot do too much of it. It is reading that will furnish the student with a varied and useful vocabulary, and make him acquainted with turns of expression, with forms of phrase, with syntactical constructions and idiomatic combinations. It is the best means of rendering the pupil, through practice, familiar with the material of the language and with the laws governing its use.

Literature is the one great treasure house which must be opened to the student, and there is a wealth of information, culture, delight, beauty, power and inspiration in the French and German literatures, both classical and modern. There are so many good reading texts offered us that often one is at a loss which to choose.

Of all the exercises in language teaching it is reading that can be made most pleasing. After a good drama, or a little comedy has been read and understood, the members of the class are delighted to take the individual roles and they acquaint themselves very creditably. And when allowed to cast the play, it is remarkable how judiciously they assign the various parts to those who can best perform them.

One of the conditions I most regret is that we may not, cannot expect our pupils to read much outside of school. With four or five studies to prepare, lessons in music, painting, dancing, domestic science, attendance at the gymnasium, there is very little, if any, time left for outside reading.

So all we can do is to introduce them to the best literature of the language they are learning and create in them a thirst for more. The mortifying consciousness that we do not, cannot accomplish as much as we should like to is surely not peculiar to the teachers of foreign languages, and need not discourage us. We learn every day how to improve our instruction, how to better adapt it to the needs of our pupils, and by efforts, daily renewed, by earnest work and sincere devotion to our profession we give them the best that is in us, and though it be not a visible amount in just so much of French or German, it is, I hope, something that may serve them well in after life. So, notwithstanding the difficulties we have to overcome, the failings and disappointments we experience, I think it a delightful calling to teach modern languages as living languages.